

WORKING DRAFT



## TPEAC One-Stop/Pilots Subcommittee

# Interdisciplinary Project Team Guidance

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## **1.01 Using this Guidance**

This guidance provides details on convening and conducting an Interagency Project Team as a tool for streamlined state transportation project delivery. It provides background, checklists and templates that can be used as tools to support effective IPT processes. This guidance is intended to support the goals and advantages identified in [Section 1.03](#). It also aims to create consistency while allowing ample room for flexibility and scalability to fit individual projects with unique permitting needs, such as on-site mitigation, alternative and off-site mitigation, and the use of watershed characterization. The guidance is also a receptacle for institutionalizing improvements to the IPT process through revision and updates.

## **1.02 IPT Defined**

In 2001, the Washington State Legislature established the Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC) in order to implement environmental permit streamlining for transportation projects. TPEAC is focused on achieving both transportation and environmental goals in an efficient regulatory process, and the TPEAC legislation required that WSDOT and permitting agencies develop and apply an interim interdisciplinary permit review process on three pilot projects. TPEAC adopted a streamlined permitting process, One-Stop Permit Process, that uses an interagency team in order to facilitate expedited decision-making. TPEAC's first pilot projects used an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) to evaluate the one-stop permit process, and various conclusions regarding the process are set forth in Appendix 4.

An Interagency Project Team (IPT) is a technical group made up of federal, state, and local resource and permitting agencies, tribes, and an interdisciplinary group from WSDOT that represents planning, design, environmental, construction, and other disciplines including highways and local programs when appropriate. An IPT is established to assist WSDOT on permitting projects in a streamlined fashion, while maintaining mandated environmental protection.

An IPT is one of the main opportunities for early agency involvement in transportation project planning, design, and permitting. This interagency group is also a forum for collaboration and coordination in order to deliver transportation projects that integrate maximum environmental benefits with the cost-effective delivery and operation of transportation systems and services that meet public needs. An IPT facilitates early identification and resolution of issues in order to avoid spending unanticipated time and money on those issues at the end of the permitting process. An IPT can also guide the timeline for decision-making in a collaborative process that has built-in opportunities for communication, planning and identification of issues.

### 1.03 When to Start an IPT

Ideally, an IPT will be formed during the WSDOT Project Definition process just after a draft Project Summary, including a draft Environmental Review Summary, has been prepared. (See [Environmental Procedures Manual Section 320](#)) As pointed out in **Section 2.01 – When is an Interagency Project Team (IPT) Appropriate?**, there may be existing forums that can substitute for early formation of an IPT. If necessary, an IPT can remain in existence from Project Definition into Design and through Plans Specifications & Estimates (PS&E) and Construction, in order to influence and respond to design and construction changes.

### 1.04 Goals and Advantages to using an IPT

Group decision-making processes can be structured, predictable, logical, easily understood, effective, and support good decisions. Goals of each IPT should be adopted soon after the team is formed. Advantages of using an IPT can include some of the following:

- ◆ Early involvement and shared knowledge reduces project impacts in design therefore resulting in less mitigation, less cost, and a more environmentally sustainable project.
- ◆ Faster decision making due to team commitment and improved coordination.
- ◆ Greater ability to meet ad dates for projects that are on a fast track.
- ◆ Builds agreement among stakeholders.
- ◆ Keep project delivery goals and permitting needs on track through IPT identification of critical paths and time lines for decision-making in a collaborative process that has built-in opportunities for communication and identification of issues.
- ◆ Clear roles and responsibilities for team members can be developed to provide focus on project needs and identification of action groups as necessary to expedite the work.
- ◆ Early identification of issues helps to avoid or minimize costs that occur when issues aren't addressed until near or after a scheduled permit delivery or ad date.
- ◆ Focus on substantive issues through improved participant understanding of the project.
- ◆ Supports determination of adequate design detail and information needed for permit decisions.
- ◆ Complete applications, at time of submittal, achieved through IPT discussions of data needs.
- ◆ Fewer resubmittals and last minute studies and data collection.
- ◆ Joint Public Review achieved when the IPT conducts concurrent or group reviews of the complete application.
- ◆ More efficient and appropriate content in permits and other proprietary authorizations.
- ◆ Reduction or elimination of conflicting agency permit conditions that cause project redesign or permit revisions.

- ◆ Implementable and enforceable permit conditions.
- ◆ Mitigation that is acceptable to all agencies through team development and agreements.

## **1.05 Roles and Responsibilities of WSDOT Project Management Team**

Roles and responsibilities can be defined for each organization participating in a project or down to the level of each individual on the project management team. The definition and mutual acceptance of organizational and individual roles and responsibilities expedites arrival at a common understanding of “who will do what.”

A Project Management Team (PMT) formed by WSDOT for each project, is made up of multiple disciplines within WSDOT, including Planning, Design, Construction, and Environmental at a minimum. A PMT is led by a Project Manager as follows:

Project Manager Role:

The Project Manager applies specialized knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to carry out the project sponsor’s (WSDOT executive who assigned the Project Manager) direction through project completion. A Project Manager and the Project Management Team have the following responsibilities:

To the project sponsor:

- ◆ Come to a mutual understanding of the project work plan (including scope, schedule, budget, and other primary elements of the project) to obtain endorsement of the project sponsor.
- ◆ Communicate project progress using appropriate project status reports and meetings.
- ◆ Identify when project sponsor endorsement will be required throughout the project.
- ◆ During the project, communicate any significant changes in scope, schedule, budget, or customer satisfaction.
- ◆ Deliver the project in accordance with the endorsed work plan, including schedule and budget.

To the project customers:

- ◆ Understand customer needs and expectations.
- ◆ Communicate progress to customers.
- ◆ Communicate change and provide options for analysis leading to a preferred choice.
- ◆ Deliver the project in accordance with the endorsed project work plan.
- ◆ Solicit and incorporate customer feedback in project closure.

To Interagency Project Team Members:

The PMT or a subset that includes the facilitator will have a focused relationship with the PMT to plan and implement the IPT process. They have the following responsibilities:

- ◆ Provide leadership and management.
- ◆ Be an advocate for the team.
- ◆ Obtain team endorsement on the project work plan and major changes.
- ◆ Advocate internal and external communication.
- ◆ Manage change in scope, schedule, and budget.
- ◆ Initiate ongoing team building.

- ◆ Mentor team members in project management.
- ◆ Provide the planning summary and other pre-meeting materials identified in [Section 3.03 – Early Information Needs and WSDOT Responsibilities](#).
- ◆ Provide appropriate agencies and other stakeholders with the information and documentation developed by the IPT that is needed to support an expedited decision-making process.
- ◆ Coordinate input from the agencies to address permit development and information needs and permit conditions.
- ◆ Adequately address agency resource needs consistent with the Permit Efficiency and Accountability Act ([RCW 47.06C](#)).

## **1.06 Roles and Responsibilities of Interagency Project Team Members**

### ***IPT Members Role***

The members of an IPT can perform the following tasks:

- ◆ Assist the PMT in determining the appropriate level of detail required to support streamlining such as providing a good project description, adequate design detail, and critical construction methods at appropriate points in the process to ultimately support permit application and review;
- ◆ Compile applications and assist in defining a complete application to trigger the start of permit review periods;
- ◆ Conduct concurrent or group review of the project impacts, identifying issues and concerns early in the process, and working to resolve the issues during the permit process;
- ◆ Develop permit conditions that will not conflict with other federal, state, and local agency permits, will ensure resource protection, and that can be implemented by WSDOT;
- ◆ Revise and/or approve suggested timelines and commitments of the PMT;
- ◆ Identify critical paths, set timelines, and establish roles and responsibilities for team members;
- ◆ Review and comment on the Project Summary/Environmental Review package;
- ◆ Establish a master timeline and schedule with the PMT;
- ◆ Attend meetings and serve as the main point person for communication and coordination between the IPT and their agency.
- ◆ Coordinate attendance of other agency staff (needed for policy direction, permitting decisions and technical expertise) at pertinent IPT meetings.
- ◆ Coordinate and communicate with other agencies and organizations outside the IPT process.
- ◆ Serve as the agency decision maker, when appropriate.



- 2.01 When is an Interagency Project Team (IPT) Appropriate?
- 2.02 Budget and Funding an IPT

## **2.01 When is an Interagency Project Team (IPT) Appropriate?**

As stated earlier, IPTs can result in improved communication on complex issues or inventive approaches, less permitting overlap, reduced permit timelines, and fewer permit revisions. It is recommended that for most large scale, high cost, or complex projects an IPT will provide significant benefits and should be seriously considered. For smaller projects that have complex regulations or regulations covering the same activity or environmental element, a smaller scale IPT would be beneficial. An IPT is a flexible tool that will be used when necessary. There might be stages during the life of a project when an IPT would not need to meet. In addition there are existing forums, such as the biennial interagency review meetings that WSDOT initiates, that (in some cases) could substitute for early formation of an IPT.

**An IPT should be considered for projects that fit any of the following criteria, and an IPT may be especially appropriate for projects that fit several criteria:**

- ◆ High cost projects;
- ◆ Projects with multiple agency permits;
- ◆ Projects where federal, state, and local agencies have jurisdictional authority for the same issues or resources;
- ◆ Signatory Agency Committee (SAC) projects (those requiring an Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] and an Individual Permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). These projects would benefit from a continual agency review, or transition to an IPT to obtain permit decisions once the SAC process is completed (post Record of Decision), and the permitting process starts;
- ◆ Projects that require an EIS, Environmental Assessment (EA), or Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance (MDNS);
- ◆ Projects with significant environmental impacts, or complex or contentious issues;
- ◆ Projects where the add date or construction start goals are scheduled to occur sooner than permit decisions can occur under normal permit timelines;
- ◆ Projects that are requesting alternative mitigation approaches that need to be approved by more than one agency;
- ◆ Projects that are on a fast track due to emergency issues or a potential loss of funding;
- ◆ Projects that require a re-design or are affected by significant new information that triggers significant project changes, new or revised permits, or significant new environmental impacts;
- ◆ Shelved projects – when projects that have been shelved for a number of years are funded and brought into the transportation decision-making process at the permitting or redesign stage, an IPT can be used to update any environmental data or impact analyses that are out of date because of changes in existing environmental conditions, laws, or standards. This should be done in a way that minimizes redesign, is cost-effective, and maximizes beneficial environmental outcomes.

If an IPT is not used for such projects, the PMT should still consider using other mechanisms, including some of the IPT tools identified in this guidance, to facilitate environmental permit decision-making.

## 2.02 Budget and Funding an IPT

### ***Estimating a Budget to Support an IPT***

A decision whether to utilize an IPT to support permitting should be made after reviewing the draft Project Summary for a project, or when asked while building budgets during project scoping. There should be a clear expectation of benefits and reduced risks to warrant the additional upfront project costs. The necessary resources for supporting an IPT can be projected by considering the following budget items. These costs should be budgeted as above normal line costs for permitting. Actual costs and notes from the Hood Canal Bridge Project are listed in parentheses as a point of reference.

**Facilitator** – identify range of services expected (Transportation Planning Specialist 4-5 skill level at about 25% time including agenda setting meetings with project management team, pre-meeting prep of communication tools, email communications w/members).

**Note Taker** – consider the actual meeting time and post-meeting editing time. As the learning curve on the project goes up the note taking time will go down, assuming secretary skill level. Entry-level technical staff may take less time and provide more accurate and appropriate notes as they can better follow the technical and context flow of the meeting. (10 hours/meeting assuming a 6 hour actual meeting time for a senior administrative assistant to start, this tapered to 7 hours as the 16 month IDT effort progressed).

**Per meeting host cost** - assumes meeting rooms at no cost; includes lunches, snacks and beverages to support working lunches. (\$4,000.00 to support 14 months of meetings at 1-2 meetings per month).

**Team building/Appreciation gifts** – the investment in building a working relationship and maintaining those relationships through the life of the project cannot be underestimated. Accelerated schedules will necessitate accelerated team building. Costs may include working lunches associated with a project orientation, a facilitated team building workshop, etc. (thank you gifts for 24 participants were \$600).

**Field Trips (vans)** – state vehicle usage and mileage estimates.

**Conference calls** – a large project that crosses several local jurisdictions may warrant more tele- or video-conference events.

**Graphics/Printing** - aerial photographs, reports, applications, etc will need to be produced for all participants. In addition, permitting progress will need to be transparent, necessitating web updates and public relations materials that are out of the ordinary. Materials developed for the IPT can help fulfill this need.

**Computer tech support** – website, streaming video, animation, and advanced project management tools accessible to team members may necessitate more charges in this area.

**Supplemental Project Management Team meetings** – Strategy setting meetings are necessary to keep the IPT effort efficient yet flexible to respond to changing project needs. Personnel, logistics, politics and other factors will need attention through the life of the project. If conflict management is actively used to resolve issues, then Regional and Headquarters alignment on positions and consequences will result in a large communication web of approvals on a periodic basis.

**WSDOT Project Staffing** – WSDOT project staffing resource needs from project design office, environmental and technical support areas (structures, water quality, hazardous materials etc.) are in excess of what would normally be required to obtain environmental permits via a non IPT “traditional” permitting process. An additional 25 to 50 percent of estimated PE costs related to environmental permitting should be budgeted to accommodate the IPT process. The variety of issues to address, scale of impacts, and project complexity will affect whether you are at the bottom or top of the 25 to 50 percent range. This additional effort to support the IPT process results from:

- The need for additional WSDOT staff to attend numerous IPT and off-line meetings
- Increased interaction and coordination required of the additional resource agency personnel involved through an IPT process. Learning curves for junior staff and work on unprecedented issues will be a resource drain.
- A need to take conservative or cautionary positions given the legislative, public, and executive focus on an IPT. A dialogue between IPT participants should occur to determine the level of up-front coordination needed to avoid problem solving after advertisement or during construction.
- Increased record keeping needs and rapid minutes turnaround.

**Project Liaisons** – WSDOT provides funding and/or staff positions to support permitting and consultation needs at state and federal natural resource agencies. The Project Manager, or a designee, should discuss projected needs with Headquarters Environmental Services prior to forming an IPT so an individual’s work plan can be adjusted. Otherwise a negotiated commitment of non-liaison time should be worked out with each agency.

A project that forms an IPT will require timely and focused attention and may need funding for local government and/or tribal participation, as well. The expectations for data gathering, impact analysis, permit review, and alternative mitigation analysis support will determine resource needs.

- 3.01 Team Recruitment
- 3.02 Team Charters
- 3.03 Early Information Needs and WSDOT Responsibilities
- 3.04 Initial Meeting Preparation for IPT Members

### **3.01 Team Recruitment**

The Project Manager and Environmental Manager need to work with the Headquarters Environmental Services Office Management Team to assess liaison and resource agency staff availability. A draft needs assessment should be initially negotiated with the Resource Agency Liaison Manager. The following elements in this section should be reviewed to assist with preparing the draft needs assessment.

#### ***Which agencies and organizations should be invited to participate?***

When creating an initial IPT list of invited members, or when revisiting the team membership at midpoints in the team process, consider the following variables and recommendations:

##### ***Agencies with regulatory and proprietary jurisdiction.***

Invite agencies that issue permits and authorizations as well as those with scientific, planning and technical expertise related to the project. Federal, tribal, state, regional, and local government agencies, including special purpose districts, should be consulted for potential involvement in the project activities. The Centennial Accord Plan will be helpful in determining which tribal groups may have an interest in the project.

##### ***Scale, complexity, or controversy of the project.***

Projects of abnormal scale, complexity, or controversy could generate interest from additional agencies and individuals interested in possible mitigation requirements and site selection. These parties should be consulted to identify when and how their IPT participation would be most beneficial.

##### ***The stage of the project.***

For continuity and consistency, consider inviting participants from other previous, concurrent, or future teams working on the same project. Depending on the stage of the project, the project delivery IPT might overlap or dovetail with other interagency teams that have been formed such as the Signatory Agency Committee for the NEPA/SEPA/404 merger process, WSDOT's advisory interdisciplinary team for NEPA EIS preparation or, if relevant, the WSDOT watershed characterization technical team. The role of some team members could change from an advisory focus during the early Project Definition phase to a coordinating focus during the design and permitting phase of Project Delivery. In the case of the Signatory Agency Committee, projects requiring a NEPA EIS and an individual Corps Section 404 or Section 10 permit, the Project Manager should consult the SAC group to obtain agreement on ways to dovetail or integrate the SAC process into the IPT workplan.

## ***Who should represent each agency or organization?***

Each invited agency or organization should be able to identify a representative to the IPT. The responsibilities of this representative are included in [\*\*\*Section – 1.05 Roles and Responsibilities of Interagency Project Team Members\*\*\*](#) and should be reviewed so the agency can select an appropriate representative and agree to the commitments, roles and responsibilities expected of them as an IPT member.

Identified team responsibilities should be a component of the IPT charter.

## ***When should members be recruited?***

In general, it is easier to invite all interested parties at the earliest opportunity in order to create effective continuity and forward progress of the IPT process. Initial IPT meetings should evaluate the composition of the team and make adjustments accordingly. After the IPT is formed and running, the membership of the IPT should be reevaluated when certain triggers occur. This includes situations where new impacts/issues are identified and when the project scope has changed.

## ***What should we do if an invited agency declines to participate?***

When an invited agency declines to participate, or can only participate on a limited basis, the team, and the PMT, will need to adapt by utilizing written communication, conference calls, offline meetings emails, etc. with the missing agency(ies). The mechanism for doing this should be part of the charter. Also, specific guidance for local government participation on a transportation project of statewide significance is provided in [RCW 47.06C.060](#).

## **3.02 Team Charters**

A team charter (or MOU) is created to initiate or build the project team and align the participants toward a common goal. Developing a charter helps the team come to a common understanding of the project vision, team mission, operating guidelines, boundaries and measures of success. The following guidance is offered in developing a team charter for a permit streamlining Interagency Project Team. It is offered as a suggested, not a required, format. A sample team charter appears in *Appendix 5 - IPT Charter Sample*.

### ***Team Members***

This section identifies the members of the team, what agency or organization they represent and what their area of expertise is. If the team so desires, proposed roles and responsibilities of team members can be incorporated into this section. Proposed facilitator responsibilities can also be incorporated into the project charter (See [\*\*\*Section 5.03 – Meeting Facilitator\*\*\*](#), and *Appendix 14 - Facilitator Skills and Responsibilities*).

### ***The Purpose***

This section outlines what the team sees as its purpose (reason for being).

### ***The Vision***

What will be the desired result of this team's work? What are its goals?

## ***The Mission***

How will the team accomplish its vision or goals? What steps will it take?

## ***Operating Guidelines***

Define how the team will conduct its typical functions both inside and outside of meetings.

Operating guidelines should cover such items as:

- ◆ Meeting etiquette
- ◆ Decision-making process (clearly identifying how decisions will be made and finalized through the process)
- ◆ Contingencies for when agencies are not fully represented or members change
- ◆ What form meeting documentation should take and how it should be distributed.
- ◆ Team member responsibility/commitments for
  - ◇ Participation (in and out of IPT meetings)
  - ◇ Completing assignments
  - ◇ Representing their agency or organization
  - ◇ Problem-solving and issue resolution
- ◆ Off-line meeting protocol

## ***Boundaries***

Define the limits relevant to the team's mission. Often set by the project sponsor, well-defined project boundaries can be very useful for addressing potential changes. Teams frequently find it valuable to distinguish goals (desirable but not mandatory elements) from absolute boundaries.

Examples of boundaries are:

- ◆ Budget
- ◆ Design guidelines
- ◆ Projected advertisement or project delivery date
- ◆ IPTs role in NEPA/SEPA

## ***Measures of Success***

Measures of success are tools to assess the accomplishment of critical success factors.

Critical success factors define the most important things the team must accomplish to fulfill its mission and achieve project success. Attainment of these critical success factors should be measured throughout the life of the team and not just at its completion to ensure that the team is staying on the intended track.

## ***Communication Plan***

Develop a plan outlining:

1. To whom information will flow
2. What methods will be used to distribute various types of information
3. When each type of communication will be produced

4. Who, in the project organizational structure, is responsible for preparing and distributing the identified items

## **Schedule**

A schedule is critical for IPT success and can be developed either as a part of the charter or as a separate document. (See [Section 4.05 – Master Timeline and Schedule](#).)

## **Endorsement**

Prepare a statement of endorsement of the charter signed by the team members.

## **3.03 Early Information Needs and WSDOT Responsibilities**

### ***Previous Plans, Analysis and Decisions***

Many decisions have gone into the development of a transportation project prior to initiating the design phase and assembling a PMT and IPT. Transportation plans developed by both local jurisdictions and regional transportation planning organizations (Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations) help to define the purpose and need for projects. Transportation planning often begins with the transportation element of local comprehensive plans and moves through the state, regional and corridor study levels leading to project delivery. (See <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ppsc/planning/>)

The PMT should provide a summary of any planning information to an IPT when it is formed. When drafting the summary it is important for the PMT to remember that the planning process is iterative and decisions are built upon each other. Early decisions provide the foundation for subsequent decisions. It's also important to remember, though, that revisions to the plan, new information, or changing environmental or regulatory conditions, may necessitate revisiting prior environmental analysis and decisions.

### ***WSDOT Responsibilities and Preparation for the Initial Meetings***

To plan and facilitate the initial Interagency Project Team (IPT) meeting(s), the following products should be developed by the PMT and submitted to the IPT a minimum of two weeks prior to their first meeting:

#### ***INITIAL MEETING MATERIALS:***

- ◆ A summary of all available previous planning and environmental and technical analyses, reports, and decisions associated with the project:
  - ◇ Assemble all readily available information associated with the project for presentation to the IPT. The regional planning office should be able to put you in touch with any additional studies generated in WSDOT HQ Planning or by the relevant local jurisdiction and regional transportation office (MPO/RTPO). (See [Figure 3-1 Current Planning to Project Development Flowchart](#) from the Transportation Planning Reference Manual and [Figure 3-2a Planning Study Matrix Statewide](#) from the Transportation Planning Reference Manual.)
  - ◇ Develop a summary of the applicable plans, environmental analyses, and studies for the IPT. This summary, at a minimum, should include the elements of the plan or study listed in

*Appendix 6 - Review and Document Available Existing Information Template.* Also see in *Appendix 6*:

- *Review and Document Available Information (studies) - template; and*
- *Review and Document Available Information (planning and environmental analysis) - example.*
- ◆ A project description including the proposed purpose and need statement. If the project is part of a larger project or plan, clarification of this purpose and need statement may be needed. If the purpose and need comes from a previous planning document, it should be noted.
- ◆ Project logical termini
- ◆ Project Permitting Strategy
  - ◇ Status and plan for compliance with NEPA/SEPA (SEPA and NEPA can be an integral part of the IPT work, or it can be more independent, depending on the significance and complexity of the issues.)
  - ◇ Flowchart of process steps
  - ◇ Proposed project permitting timeline (*See Appendix 7 – Calendar/Project Permitting Timeline Template*)
  - ◇ Preliminary plan for interfacing with other processes (e.g. watershed, SAC)
  - ◇ Draft Public Involvement Plan (*See Chapter 7 – Public Involvement*)
- ◆ A summary of the key environmental and permitting issues identified by WSDOT for the project.
- ◆ A draft listing of the permits expected for the project.
- ◆ List of agencies, etc., contacted and representatives invited.
- ◆ A draft or example charter for the IPT (optional). *See Section 3.02 – Team Charters.*
- ◆ The WSDOT draft Environmental Review Summary for the project that identifies the required permits and approvals, the known environmental impacts and potential mitigation, and the type of environmental review documentation required.

### **3.04 Initial Meeting Preparation for IPT members**

#### ***Resource Agency Responsibilities and preparation for the initial meetings***

- ◆ Review information provided by the project PMT (*See Section 3.03 –Early Information Needs and WSDOT Responsibilities and Preparation for the Initial Meetings*) prior to the meeting scheduled to discuss that topic
- ◆ Identify information needs (particularly for the preliminary drafting of permits, providing permit support information)
- ◆ Identify information priority (sequencing)
- ◆ Identify agency staff roles
  - ◇ Regular IPT participants,
  - ◇ Intermittent participants,
  - ◇ Support/technical assistance
- ◆ Identify opportunities for coordinated public review
- ◆ Identify a subset of laws, regulations and policies that are applicable to the project. (The resource agencies should maintain a master list of applicable laws regulations and policies that they are responsible for implementing, and the subset would be created from the master list.)
- ◆ Identify changes to laws, regulations, and policies that would affect the project
- ◆ Identify their agency’s anticipated key environmental and permitting issues
- ◆ Identify agency decision process and edit proposed timelines and expectations as needed



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## **4.01 Tools for Managing an IPT**

The following tools will help the Program Management Team (PMT) guide an IPT to the goals and expectations for project delivery.

### ***MINIMUM TOOLS TO BE USED BY ALL IPTs:***

#### ***Meeting management tools***

Meeting management tools for all IPTs can be found in Chapter 5.

#### **Project management tools**

- ◆ Schedule and timelines with clear work deliverables and commitments that are agreed to by all parties.
- ◆ IPT participation to define necessary data needs and project information. (To best use resource agency time, we recommend that sufficient project information be made available prior to starting an IPT, and include a summary of available information on environmental impacts, avoidance and minimization measures that have been or can be incorporated, and ideas on construction techniques and BMPs that may be applied.)

### ***ADDITIONAL TOOLS CRITICAL FOR COMPLEX PROJECTS OR LARGE IPTs THAT HAVE MULTIPLE AGENCIES:***

- ◆ Meeting Facilitator (*See [Section 5.03 – Meeting Facilitator](#) and [Appendix 14 – Facilitator Skills and Responsibilities](#)*)
- ◆ Tracking and regular reminders to the agencies of pending timelines and commitments
- ◆ Early site investigation or field trip to discuss project specifics and resource issues
- ◆ Mitigation discussions for suggestions on appropriate mitigation based on level of expected impact and success of similar mitigation as applied on other projects.

## **4.02 Integrated Permit System**

With financial assistance from the Federal Highway Administration, WSDOT has hired a consultant to explore a newly proposed environmental review and permitting tool, known as an Integrated Permit System (IPS), for use on transportation projects. As currently conceived in Second Substitute Senate Bill 5694 (SSSB-5694), as passed by the legislature in 2003, an IPS would integrate project design, environmental review, permitting, and mitigation elements into a single process.

Major components of an IPS include a Unified Project Decision Support Document (UPDSD) and a Unified Project Administrative Procedure (UPAP). A “UPDSD” is intended to be a single document

proactively developed to support and satisfy all needs for information, analysis, and evaluation; document and justify incremental project decisions; inform the public and interested parties; and support integration of project design, environmental review, permitting, and mitigation elements. A "UPAP" is intended to harmonize, reduce, or eliminate duplicative or conflicting procedural requirements for environmental analysis, agency decision-making, and public review and comment.

Some guidance materials and recommendations for developing and implementing an IPS are scheduled for completion by April 2004.

## **4.03 Information Technology Tools**

### ***Information Technology Coordination***

#### ***Purpose***

Coordinate available Information Technology (IT) resources for managing the team and the project so that team members can use available and effective IT tools. IPT members and IT support staff from all participating agencies should be involved.

#### ***Organization and Content***

Multiple technologies exist for helping an IPT with the following functions:

- ◆ Task Management (assignments, due dates, dependencies, etc.)
- ◆ Meeting Management (agendas, handouts, minutes, calendar, maps, etc.)
- ◆ Document Management (version control, review routing, etc.)
- ◆ Permit Content Development (studies & reports, GIS, models, manuals, project design drawings, GPS, aerial photos, etc.)
- ◆ Communications and Reporting to the Public

Ideally, all these functions could be delivered to the team via a website. Once website support has been identified, the website developer should meet with the IPT to specify which functions can be delivered via an IPT website and which cannot.

Each IPT should coordinate carefully with whomever is maintaining information in the WSDOT Project Delivery Information System (PDIS) for their project to ensure that, as tasks in the system's Master Deliverables List are established and accomplished (or postponed), all necessary information is recorded in the system. Depending on the technical resources used, this may be an automated or manual process.

## ***IPT Website.***

### ***Purpose and Audience***

An IPT website would have two basic purposes. One is to provide timely information to the public and other non-IPT members, and the other is to serve as a central internal information source for IPT members. Ideally, a public internet-based website would be established that also contains a secure sub-website section for IPT members only. Examples of documents to be included in the public website include final meeting minutes, action items, IPT charter, schedules, current project description, issue sheets, environmental analysis, studies, reports, permit applications, final permits. Examples of documents to be included in the secure IPT website include working/draft documents (project description, permits, mitigation plans, monitoring plans), comments on various draft applications, proposed agendas, draft meeting minutes and other meeting materials.

The principle audience for an IPT website would include the IPT members and other agency and organization staff who are involved with the project, related projects, or TPEAC. The website could also be viewed by other members of the public interested in following the project, but who are unable to attend meetings and/or hearings.

IPT members should consider the potential time savings realized by posting documents rather than addressing individual requests, if they are of interest to many but not distributed to all. (NOTE: Many agencies have found that public disclosure requests are significantly reduced when substantial and useful information is posted on a website.)

Documents that are not suitable for web-based viewing, or are not intended to be widely distributed, should be circulated via e-mail or in hard copy only. Determining the method of distribution for documents could be a component of the IPT Charter.

### ***Location and Links***

At a minimum, an IPT website should be linked to the WSDOT project website and TPEAC website. When applicable, FHWA and other agencies might want to include a link to it as well.

### ***Organization and Content***

*See Appendix 8 – IPT Website Organization and Chart.*

### ***Website Management***

The PMT and facilitator should identify and work closely with a website manager who can design the site and work on an ongoing basis to receive documents and update the site on a monthly or bi-weekly basis, depending on level of activity. Regular solicitation for documents from IPT members should be included in any meeting reminders/agenda e-mails. Time should be set-aside in a few IPT meetings to comment on the website and its contents.

*Also see Appendix 9 – Information Technology Tools.*

### ***Other IT Tools***

Data exchange and sharing formats should be identified for task management, document management, and permit content development functions if these can't be delivered on an IPT website. Discussions with agency data stewards should occur to coordinate opportunities to fill information gaps with information gathering activities going on outside the project.

## 4.04 Disputes, Conflicts, and Issue Resolution

### ***Product.***

An Issue Resolution Process agreed to by an IPT. (This could be included in the Team Charter or kept as a separate document.) The IPT should consider the time needed to resolve conflicts when developing and revising the permitting schedule.

### ***Background.***

The diverse missions and priorities of organizations represented on an IPT influence the collaborative approach to transportation project delivery both positively and negatively. Conflict management is a tool that allows a collaborative process (within and between agencies and organizations) to identify and prosper from the positive aspects of conflicting missions, mandates and procedures. These conflicts can lead to disputes over issues ranging from scheduling, priority of work on the project, terminology, and interpretation of science, policy, and regulations. The root cause of some problems could include conflicting mandates, personality differences, agency cultures, and insufficient resources.

A dispute or issue resolution process is a necessary tool that relies on many other practices for preventing and overcoming conflicts within the context of the IPT process. These practices are addressed in other sections of this guidance. They include:

- ◆ Involve agencies early and often in project planning and development
- ◆ Define roles, responsibilities, and expectations upfront.
- ◆ Identify key decisions points and potential conflicts early.
- ◆ Integrate review and permitting processes.
- ◆ Establish negotiated timeframes.
- ◆ Allocate sufficient resources for planning and development.
- ◆ Learn about the missions, legal authorities, areas of expertise, and cultures of participating agencies.
- ◆ Employ facilitators, mediators and other staff who are trained in conflict resolution and problem solving.
- ◆ Recognize when conflict is interfering with progress and it would be appropriate to elevate issues to a higher authority for resolution.

The benefits of a more holistic approach to conflict resolution include the following:

- ◆ Team is kept on track.
- ◆ Efficient, innovative and environmentally sound transportation decisions are made.
- ◆ Productive working relationships are built based on trust.
- ◆ Reduced duplication of effort related to reviewing and approving projects.
- ◆ Greater predictability in the transportation process.

It is possible that specific issues will arise and become disputes among organizations represented on an IPT at any time during the project delivery process. Every effort should be made to resolve such issues or disputes at the IPT or agency level through an agreed upon process. Issues relating to final actions taken by a permitting agency will be resolved through the appropriate statutory appeal process set forth for each respective action. The issue resolution process may not abrogate or supplant any appeal right of any party under existing statutes.

Additional background for issue resolution is found in the “10 step” list for Effective Agency Dispute Resolution and is included in this guidance as *Appendix 10*.

## ***Issue Resolution Process***

A sample Issue Resolution Process is provided in *Appendix 11 – Sample Issue Resolution Process*.

The agreed upon process must include specific parameters that dictate how issues are elevated. This could include a timeframe for each step.

## ***Other Resources***

### ***Federal Highway Administration***

FHWA, in collaboration with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, has prepared a conflict resolution guidance manual entitled Collaborative Problem Solving: Better and Streamlined Outcomes for All: Guidance on Managing Conflict and Resolving Disputes between State and Federal Agencies During the Transportation Project Development and Environmental Review Process. This document can be viewed and downloaded at:

📄 <http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/strmlng/adrguide/index.htm>

### ***The US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution***

The U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (IECR) maintains a “transportation roster” of qualified facilitators and other dispute resolution professionals that agencies can call upon for assistance. This list can be accessed at:

📄 <http://www.ecr.gov/roster/troster.htm>

## **4.05 Master Timeline and Schedule**

### ***Products – Master Target Timeline***

#### ***Description and Purpose***

A master timeline is important for IPT success. It identifies:

- ◆ Project timelines
- ◆ Permit timelines
- ◆ Interdependent permits
- ◆ Important interim permit process milestones
- ◆ An issue resolution timeline

A master timeline is intended to assist the PMT and IPT with managing the process by identifying:

- ◆ Where the project is in the process;
- ◆ Where the project has to go in the process; and
- ◆ If progress is not being made.

The timeline can be used to help identify how new information or changes to the project may affect individual permit processes and the overall timeline. It is particularly important to keep early steps moving to allow appropriate time for subsequent steps.

## ***Development and Revision***

The master timeline and schedule will be developed using: 1) the initial WSDOT proposed timeline, 2) the individual agency permit timelines, and 3) suggestions from IPT members on overall schedule and permit timeline integration.

Timelines are living documents; they must be revisited and updated over time. WSDOT can prepare and distribute an initial proposed timeline prior to the first IPT meeting. Permitting agencies should bring timelines for their permits to the first IPT meeting. Discussion, collation, and approval of a project target timeline should occur during the first few meetings.

The timeline should be revisited on a regular basis. This could be accomplished in more than one way:

- ◆ At each IPT meeting – at a minimum, the facilitator should ask for changes to the timeline or for any new information affecting the timeline.
- ◆ At key target milestone points (e.g. application submittal, public comment period, supplemental information/revised application, issuance of key permits linked to longer term permits).

## ***Contents***

A master timeline includes dates for:

- ◆ Process start and end
- ◆ Target project start date, project advertisement date
- ◆ IPT meetings
- ◆ NEPA/SEPA process
- ◆ Permit application (or date for initiating agency contact), including:
  - ◇ public notice,
  - ◇ comment periods,
  - ◇ agency review periods,
  - ◇ supplemental information,
    - preparation,
    - final review,
    - permit development,
    - issuance,
- ◆ Appeal processes, if they have the potential to affect the project start date

The schedule should allow time for issue resolution and use of the issue resolution process. Additionally, the identification of key issues and steps for resolving them should be coordinated with development of the schedule.

*See Appendix 7 – Calendar/Project Permitting Timeline Template.*

*See Appendix 12 (E) – Individual Agency Permit Timeline Sample/Template.*

## 4.06 Key Decisions and Products

Decision-making can be an important role for an IPT. The composition of an IPT influences the types of decisions made during IPT meetings. Issues with a strong agency policy or technical component might need additional input from policy or technical personnel of the participating agencies that are not regular IPT members. The forum or method for making these decisions is dictated by the ability of the appropriate staff to participate. IPT members have the responsibility to coordinate the participation of appropriate staff within their agency or organization.

The IPT process facilitates the resolution of issues by maintaining an agreed upon schedule that provides opportunities for IPT members to obtain final agency decisions on issues outside IPT meetings. Once made, these decisions can be communicated to IPT members during or between regularly scheduled IPT meetings.

### ***Key decisions***

Key decisions are those that an IPT should be tracking and will be important at some point along the project delivery continuum. IPT participants may have different expectations about their role in various decisions that occur. Without discussion and clarification, these different expectations can lead to process dissatisfaction, disappointment, and lack of participation. The IPT should identify what the key decisions are, where they fit, when they will need to be dealt with, who needs to be involved, etc.

The PMT should identify any key decision points that will be shared with the public. (See [Chapter 7 Public Involvement](#) for more information about guidance on public involvement.)

There are at least five types of key decisions:

### ***Procedural –***

#### ***IPT process decisions:***

These are decisions about how the IPT will function, which may include decisions on the IPT charter, final meeting agendas, meeting logistics, or decisions related to the overall project permitting schedule, public participation, and other permit streamlining decisions. Most of these decisions can and should be made by the IPT after the members have had an opportunity (if necessary) to consult policy or technical staff from their agencies. These types of decisions are often incorporated into the team charter.

In some cases, a decision will be straightforward and can be decided most efficiently by having the WSDOT PMT present a proposed decision to the IPT for approval. If process decisions are made outside the regular IPT process, this information needs to be transmitted back to the IPT.

#### ***Permit process decisions:***

Many permit processes (e.g. permit timelines, public involvement requirements) are established in laws and regulations. Even in those cases, there may be some flexibility for how the process works. For example, a permit with a public involvement component may provide some flexibility in regards to the timing of a comment period or whether the comment period can be aligned or combined with another permit comment period. In these cases, it will be worthwhile for the IPT to explore options for combining/aligning the comment periods of more than one permit. This can minimize work for IPT participants as well as improve the public's understanding and participation in the process.

## **Substantive –**

### ***Environmental analysis and review decisions:***

These are decisions about the environmental analysis required for compliance with NEPA and SEPA, for ESA review, and for permit review. These decisions are particularly important for the Administrative Record.

Examples include: role of the IPT in developing a NEPA and SEPA analysis and Biological Assessment.

### ***Project design development:***

The IPT should discuss their desired role in influencing project design and siting decisions that arise while the IPT exists. Sometimes WSDOT will have a very detailed project description and design at the time of IPT formation. This may be the result of previous planning and corridor processes that fleshed out some aspects of the project. In those cases, the IPT may have a limited role in influencing significant aspects of project design and siting, although plans can and typically do change.

Examples of project design development decisions include: design and siting decisions, midpoint changes to project design and/or siting, and additions to a project's components.

### ***Permit content and conditions decisions:***

These are decisions about permit conditions. There can be an IPT or multiple agency work team role associated with these decisions. An IPT role can be appropriate when one agency's anticipated conditions on a project will affect another agency's permit condition decisions. Sharing anticipated permit conditions with the IPT might be most effectively accomplished by sharing draft permits, permit conditions, and/or offline meeting summaries. A multiple agency role may be appropriate when multiple agencies are concerned about one particular aspect of the project or the environment. IPT meetings, off-line meetings, and/or review with written comment and comment responses can be used to achieve combined and coordinated non-conflicting decisions between the interested parties.

The following template could be used to identify (or think about) IPT decisions and who will be involved, and where they will be handled. *See Appendix 13 - IPT/Selected Agency's Role in Decisions*

## **Products -**

### ***Process support products:***

These are documents, such as timelines, charters, outstanding issues sheets, offline meeting summaries.

### ***Decision making and Administrative record products:***

These are products that will be used to defend permit decisions. Ideally, this package of products can be used by all agencies as their basis for permit decisions. It should include all information needed for permit decisions. It should also provide sufficient information for readers to understand the regulatory basis for, and environmental concerns addressed in, the final project design/description and permit decisions and conditions.



- 5.01 Meeting Components
- 5.02 Meeting Management Tools
- 5.03 Meeting Facilitator

## **5.01 Meeting Components**

### ***Scheduling meetings***

Regular IPT meetings should be scheduled well in advance. If scheduled during an IPT meeting, attendees can assist in identifying meeting dates that will not conflict with other commitments. The timing and objectives of the meetings can be based on the overall plan. The IPT participants should agree to frequency, timing, length, and location of meetings.

The PMT team should determine who is responsible for developing and distributing agendas, minutes/summaries, and handouts. Detailed agendas and pre-meeting handouts should be provided at least 2 weeks in advance. These agendas must identify any agenda items where IPT decisions are proposed. Additional agency staff may need to attend. Attending staff will need to be prepared for the discussion and able to represent the agency during the IPT decision making process.

Regular agenda items to consider for inclusion:

- ◆ Previous meeting minutes review/finalization
- ◆ Offline meeting results
- ◆ Action items review and results
- ◆ Timeline – status, changes, and new issues affecting the timeline
- ◆ Project website and contents needs and update (periodic)
- ◆ Outstanding issues

Draft post meeting minutes/ summaries should be provided 1 week following meetings. Detailed meeting minutes/summaries should document any decisions made.

*See Appendix 12 (A) – Agenda Sample/Template and Appendix 12 (B) - Meeting Minutes Sample/Template.*

### ***Communication between meetings***

Communication between meetings is important and can take the form of phone calls, email, offline meetings, a common website, or mailings. Offline meetings are addressed below. The team can agree on the appropriate modes for communication (this should be in the charter).

### ***Project Schedule***

The WSDOT Project Manager and Project Management Team will maintain the schedule. The status of the project schedule should be addressed at every team meeting. Team members are expected to bring up items that may impact the project schedule (this should be in the charter).

### ***Action items***

Noting items that require further action at each meeting and including them in the meeting minutes is a very good way to keep the team and the project on track. It is helpful to devote an agenda item to reviewing action items at each meeting. It can also be helpful to electronically distribute meeting

action items within two (2) days of the meeting. People with assignments will be reminded to initiate and complete their task within the target time frame.

### ***Off-line meetings and reporting***

Off-line meetings will generally be used for topics or issues that do not concern the entire IPT. Team members can meet in person or conference call. Notes on the meeting should be circulated to all team members. *See Appendix 12 (C) - Offline Meeting Results Sample/Template.*

### ***Use of issue resolution***

The IPT should consider the time needed to resolve issues or disputes when developing and revising the permitting schedule. *See [Section 4.04 – Disputes, Conflicts, Issue Resolution](#).*

Remember to:

- ◆ Identify an IPT agreed-upon issue resolution process
- ◆ Consider timing for issue resolution in the project delivery schedule
- ◆ Use offline meetings to resolve issues early
- ◆ Identify the role of an IPT, if any, in resolving an issue

### ***Periodically reassess participation needs***

Preliminary IPT meetings should evaluate the composition of the team and make adjustments accordingly. In general it is easier to invite all interested parties to participate at the earliest opportunity in order to create effective continuity and make progress in the IPT process. The membership of the IPT should be reevaluated when necessary. A discussion on composition of the team and level of participation should be considered for inclusion on the next meeting agenda if:

- ◆ The project scope changes
- ◆ There are new impacts/issues identified
- ◆ Permits are added

If team needs change, the PMT can consider inviting new participants. Remember to use the charter to identify any mechanisms for dealing with missing participants.

## **5.02 Meeting Management Tools**

The WSDOT Project Management Team (PMT) tracks the schedule and organizes the team. For smaller IPTs, a member of the PMT may provide a distinct role as a skilled facilitator during the meetings. For larger IPTs, a separate facilitator is essential.

1. Team Charter (*See [Section 3.02](#)*)
2. Master Timeline and Schedule (*See [Section 4.05](#)*)
3. Issue Resolution Process (*See [Section 4.04](#)*)
4. Meeting Facilitator (*See [Section 5.03](#)*)

## **5.03 Meeting Facilitator**

A skilled and neutral meeting facilitator is essential. Most IPT processes will involve a number of meetings; therefore, it is critical that the meetings be efficient. Having an experienced facilitator optimizes people's time and supports progress towards the project's objectives.

### ***Facilitator Skills and Responsibilities***

See *Appendix 14 – Facilitator Skills and Responsibilities* for a complete listing of desirable facilitator skills and potential responsibilities.

### ***Inviting the facilitator***

The following information should be included when inviting a facilitator to participate. This information should also be shared with the prospective facilitator's supervisor.

- ◆ Anticipated work load requirements
- ◆ Preliminary timeline identifying anticipated meeting frequency
- ◆ Anticipated facilitator responsibilities including those responsibilities occurring outside the meeting (*See Appendix 14 – Facilitator Skills and Responsibilities*)

**Note:** This can be documented in the charter clarifying facilitator, PMT, and other IPT member responsibilities.

The timing and objectives of the meetings can be based on the overall plan. The IPT participants should agree to frequency, timing, length, and location of meetings.

### ***Timing for bringing the facilitator on board***

A facilitator acquired prior to the first IPT meeting enables the team to hit the ground running. However, responsibilities and commitments may change as a result of the initial IPT meetings and may be outside the facilitator's experience or availability.

Waiting to bring a permanent facilitator on until after the team has met a few times allows the desired role and responsibilities of the facilitator to be fully identified by the team. A down side is having to employ a temporary facilitator or operate without one during the first few meetings.

- 6.01 Impacts Defined
- 6.02 Permitting Strategy
- 6.03 Mitigation
- 6.04 Permit Conditions

## **6.01 Impacts Defined**

As early as possible in the implementation stages of the IPT, project impacts need to be clearly defined so the agencies can determine which permits will be triggered, and what appropriate avoidance measures, and permit conditions will apply.

Early project and design information tends to be general, making it difficult to identify in a pre-application meeting the impacts that may trigger permits. Because of this constant challenge between early design and sufficient project detail for permit decisions, the IPT should plan for some situations when early assumptions about required permits and impacts based on general detail turn out to be wrong. Information on expected Best Management Practices and construction techniques is also helpful information for agencies when defining impacts and preparing permit terms and conditions that can be implemented by WSDOT. It is also important for an IPT to agree on the level of detail needed at the various development stages of the project in order to move through the permitting stages.

At the beginning of the IPT, there are often a number of unresolved issues involving potential impacts. It is helpful to keep a list of identified issues, including a short description of the issue, its status, interested agencies, and expected next steps for resolution. *See Appendix 15 – Outstanding Information/Issues Matrix.*

Holding offline meetings and reporting back to the IPT can be an efficient use of staff time when the issue is relevant to a subset of the IPT. Early identification and involvement of the agencies interested in a particular issue will support having the discussion once. The following steps can be helpful in defining impacts and resolving permit needs:

- ◆ Identify an environmental/permitting issue, or impact definition for discussion
- ◆ Identify agencies with interest or involvement
- ◆ Determine whether the discussion should occur within the IPT or in offline meeting(s)
- ◆ Following meetings, document issues and decisions in IPT meeting minutes or offline meeting summaries. *See Appendix 12 (C) Offline Meeting Results Sample/Template.*

## **6.02 Permitting Strategy**

Developing an overall plan for the process, including a flowchart of process steps in the overall timeline, will be critical.

The following steps should be completed by the PMT and IPT in order to get to the permit streamlining goals set by the project.

### **Step 1 – Permitting Strategy Defined:**

After developing the early information summaries as defined in [Section 3.03 – Early Information Needs and WSDOT Responsibilities and Preparation for the Initial Meetings](#), and starting a team as defined in [Section 3 – Starting an IPT](#), the next steps in the IPT process are developing an overall plan

for the process, including a flowchart of process steps in the overall timeline. This step can be done by the PMT prior to, or at the same time as, the initial IPT meetings and presented to the IPT, or it can be done by the IPT during early IPT meetings. The timing and objectives of the meetings can be based on the overall plan. The IPT participants should agree to frequency, timing, length, and location of meetings.

As part of the permit strategy definition, the IPT should make mitigation decisions. Decisions whether or not to pursue avoidance of impacts or alternative mitigation (possibly through watershed characterization methods) should be made at an early stage. The following circumstances help identify projects where these approaches may be particularly valuable:

- ◆ Project is located on expensive property, where land purchasing for mitigation is very expensive
- ◆ Impacts on the site are complex and hard to mitigate
- ◆ On-site mitigation opportunities are limited, or have a low likelihood of success
- ◆ Adjacent development pressures or activities may impact success of on-site mitigation
- ◆ Multiple agencies have an interest in the same element of the environment (e.g. fish, water quality, soils management)
- ◆ Multiple agencies have an interest in the same type of mitigation (e.g. wetland mitigation, stormwater mitigation)

Based on input from resource and permitting agencies, the preference is to have the PMT present a draft concept of the permitting strategy and timelines prior to the first IPT meeting, and then work with the IPT members to finalize a reasonable schedule and strategy. *See Appendix 16 - Permitting Strategy Sample.*

## **Step 2 – Draft Application:**

It is recommended that the Joint Aquatic Resource Permits Application (JARPA) form be used wherever possible (some local governments do not accept the JARPA form) to streamline the application process. Other applications for permits not covered by JARPA will also need to be completed, and considered in the overall timelines.

Supplemental information necessary for specific project needs can be added to the JARPA to meet individual permitting agency needs. It is not critical for all of the agencies to receive the same supplemental information if they choose to only receive the information pertinent to their jurisdictional authorities. Although it may require additional work for the PMT, providing only the required and requested information to each agency will help agency staff review the application faster.

Additional tools for assisting with this step were recommended in the TPEAC permit streamlining white paper, [Common Permit Data Requirements](#): *What are the Opportunities for Streamlining?* They include:

- ◆ A resource agency master checklist of supplemental JARPA information needs, identifying the range and type of supplemental information that is commonly needed may be available for the various permits using JARPA. Joint WSDOT and resource agency review of the master checklist, as it applies to the project, can narrow the information needs to those specifically applicable to the project.
- ◆ A single master checklist of all agency information needs, describing data needs and acceptable data sources. A single master checklist, mutually shared and agreed upon by agencies, can assist with ensuring development of the information once, that each resource agency requires. Information

sharing and discussion to achieve cross agency agreement regarding drawing standards, report standards can also occur

- ◆ Agency sharing of mitigation standards/typical mitigation requirements. Sharing can identify potential conflicts between agencies and give WSDOT the opportunity to design the project and proposed mitigation in a more informed manner.
- ◆ Standardization of common reports submitted by WSDOT. Use EPM guidance on preparing various reports (e.g. aquatic resource reports). This tool can be improved through updates of the Environmental Procedures Manual (EPM) guidance on this subject area using feedback from WSDOT and resource agency staff.

### **Step 3- Pre-application meeting:**

A pre-application meeting that includes a site visit is critical at the early stage of project permitting. For the pre-application submittal, the PMT should have a draft JARPA for review and comment submitted to the IPT at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. The agencies in attendance should review the information and provide comments within the agreed upon timeline per step 1. The comments should include:

- ◆ All recommendations for supplemental information for determining application completeness, and any supplemental information (please note – additional information and data needs may be identified during detailed project permitting and review – Step 5);
- ◆ Drawing clarity and information;
- ◆ Public notice requirements;
- ◆ Clarity of application in providing information for permitting;
- ◆ Other pertinent comments.
- ◆ In cases where WSDOT is conducting the “self-drafting of permits pilot”, the agencies should provide comments on site specific needs that should be addressed by WSDOT staff in drafting the permit conditions

### **Step 4 – Final application:**

- ◆ After receiving agency input on the draft applications, the PMT should provide final revised applications.
- ◆ In cases where there have been significant changes from the draft version, or if the PMT does not include requested agency revisions, the PMT should consider a second review by the IPT of the application prior to final submittal for permits.
- ◆ In cases where WSDOT is conducting the “self-drafting of permits pilot”, draft terms and conditions should be provided as part of the application for agency input, and for agencies to revise into final permits.
- ◆ In cases where the agencies have mandated or policy-driven timelines for determining completeness of an application, the timelines for these decision should be included in the overall schedule. Once agencies with jurisdiction agree/determine that the application is complete, the permit decision timeline is started.

### **Step 5 – Agency Review/Public Comments:**

Agencies complete a detailed review of project impacts, avoidance and minimization measures, and any compensatory mitigation that is proposed. Each agency must make a determination that the resources they are mandated to protect will be protected, and the laws they are mandated to implement will be followed. During this detailed review, additional information requests may be made in order to provide specific project details to aid in permit decisions.

## Step 6 – Permit terms and conditions:

- ◆ In cases where WSDOT is conducting the “self-drafting of permits pilot”, draft terms and conditions provided as part of the application should be revised if needed, and finalized by the agencies.
- ◆ For other projects, draft terms and conditions can be provided by some agencies for discussion with WSDOT. In some cases, official draft conditions cannot be shared or negotiated with an applicant without a public notice process, but permitting needs by the agency and the applicant can be discussed, and the agency always welcomes comments from the applicant during the permitting process.
- ◆ Comments received on those permits that require a public comment period are considered by the agencies in the final permit decisions.

## Step 7 – Permit Appeal Period:

Upon final receipt of permits that have an appeal process, the public and WSDOT must decide if they want to file an appeal within the timelines specified within each permitting law or policy. The One-Stop subcommittee completed a survey and report with a recommendation that the appeal process for the various permits not be changed or combined.

## 6.03 Mitigation

An IPT may help identify ways to avoid, minimize, or otherwise mitigate environmental impacts of a project in accordance with agency requirements. In most cases, this will require that certain types of impacts be mitigated in the following order of decreasing preference: avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing or eliminating over time, compensating for, and monitoring impacts.

Mitigation discussions should begin early. Guidance regarding whether or not to pursue avoidance of impacts, or alternative mitigation, is provided in [\*Section 6.02 - Permitting Strategy, Step 1 – Permitting Strategy Defined\*](#).

In these cases, a group discussion and decision through an IPT, or smaller workgroup, of mitigation opportunities in or adjacent to the project impact area, or within a reasonable distance from the site (usually must be within the same Water Resource Inventory Area) would be valuable. This discussion should also include interested agencies and organizations not represented on the IPT, such as tribes, proprietary agencies, and local government. It is important for the IPT to discuss the specific needs and interests of each agency and organization, including any mandated authorities for mitigation, and to craft a solution ideally that all agencies with authority on the IPT can approve. In many cases the mitigation issues and decisions are specific, and only the agencies concerned about a particular impact or mitigation need should be involved in the decision. Offline meetings to discuss these specifics are a better solution for preserving the IPT time as a whole. The group decision process should help to avoid several mitigation requirements for the same impacts that are governed by different agencies.

The State of Washington’s Alternative Mitigation Policy Guidelines should be used to help guide the discussion of when off-site or out-of-kind mitigation is appropriate. The IPT must first define the mitigation needs based on the impact, and select a mitigation plan and location that will mitigate for those impacts, and work towards high priority mitigation needs that will result in over-all watershed and environmental benefits.

In all cases, any steps taken, or proposed to be taken, to avoid, minimize, or otherwise mitigate environmental impacts should be clearly documented.

## 6.04 Permit Conditions

Using the IPT as a medium for coordinating decisions on permit conditions can be valuable in order to avoid conflicting conditions in different permits, resulting in necessary revisions to project design or issued permits. Discussing the key environmental issues, and project site specific needs can assist in final permit decisions that are implementable by WSDOT.

Some agencies can share draft conditions with WSDOT for comments during the permit decision making process, other agencies – specifically Ecology for the 401 Certification, and the Corps of Engineers have policies in place that prohibit sharing official draft conditions with applicants without a public involvement and notice process. These agencies however have an open process for discussing draft conditions, discussing project permitting concerns, and can request and/or accept submitted information from applicants to help in final preparation of permit conditions that can be implemented.

### ***WSDOT pilot for self drafting of permit conditions:***

A TPEAC pilot test initiated in 2003 is intended to determine if , by drafting its own permits, WSDOT can contribute to permit streamlining. The first pilot test of this concept is being conducted on the SR-24 project in Yakima. Per discussions on the SR-24 project, it was recommended that in cases where WSDOT is providing draft permit conditions, the conditions should be part of a complete and final JARPA, or be received as comments or information from the applicant during the public notice or permitting review process. The draft conditions should not be provided in the public notice, but would be part of all project information that is available upon request. This allows the draft conditions to be edited by the agencies without sending out a revised notice due to changes in information provided in the first notice.



- 7.01 Introduction
- 7.02 General Outreach
- 7.03 Public Meetings and Hearings
- 7.04 Public Review and Comment
- 7.05 Government to Government Outreach
- 7.06 Mitigation Opportunity Outreach

## **7.01 Introduction**

This chapter is intended to serve as guidance to involve the public efficiently and effectively where appropriate in the IPT process as well as the overall permit streamlining process used by an IPT.

Where allowed by law, the various public involvement requirements in both the NEPA/SEPA phase and various permit processes for a project, should be consolidated and coordinated to improve public access and agency accountability in project delivery.

Upon commencement of the IPT process, the PMT should present a draft public involvement plan to the IPT for review, and the IPT should refine it as needed to develop a public involvement plan for use in the process. Both plans should address general outreach, public meetings and hearings, public review and comment, government-to-government outreach, and mitigation opportunity outreach.

## **7.02 General Outreach**

A public involvement plan should include the following general outreach components, a majority of which should be regularly updated and can be maintained on an IPT website (*See [Section 4.03 – Information Technology Tools](#)*):

- ◆ Procedures for notifying members of the public regarding the IPT meeting schedule and availability of documents.
- ◆ IPT background information (participants, charter, project information, etc.)
- ◆ The planned permitting process and schedule.
- ◆ A calendar of potential public involvement opportunities including notice, hearings, and comment schedule based on the overall project schedule developed under [Section 4.05](#), including specific notation of any consolidated/coordinated public involvement processes, and including an outline description of how those would occur.
- ◆ An outreach strategy to Watershed Planning Act groups, Salmon Recovery Act Lead Entities, and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups to determine off-site mitigation potential for aquatic impacts.
- ◆ An outreach strategy with other entities to identify opportunities for mitigating other natural and/or cultural resource impacts.

## **7.03 Public Meetings and Hearings**

The IPT should consider hosting an initial open house or public briefing on the project and proposed permitting process. This would provide an opportunity to meet representatives from agencies and tribes that might not be able to participate on the IPT. It would also provide an opportunity for public input.

Once permit applications have been submitted to the IPT agencies for independent review, the agencies will coordinate and conduct their public review processes concurrently, and use consolidated public meetings and public hearings, to the extent possible and practical.

## **7.04 Public Review and Comment**

Upon submission to the agencies, permit applications are a matter of public record and are available for public review through WSDOT. Upon request, WSDOT will provide interested members of the public with:

- ◆ A copy of any permit application(s).
- ◆ A public comment and public hearing schedule.
- ◆ IPT agency information for submittal of comments.

Once all relevant public comment periods have closed, each IPT agency should submit any comments received to WSDOT for distribution to all IPT member agencies. The IPT may then assist with the development of responses to comments as appropriate, including any requests for additional opportunities for public comment.

## **7.05 Government-to-Government Outreach:**

Early consideration should be given to how the IPT will address communication with any federal, state, tribal, regional, and local agencies or governments (including special purpose districts) not represented by team members. These entities should be communicated with in accordance with any manuals and guidelines established by WSDOT, including the [Transportation Planning Reference Manual](#), [Environmental Procedures Manual](#), and [Design Manual](#), as well as some new guidelines being developed on [Context Sensitive Design](#). In addition, the team should be communicating with tribes that may have natural and/or cultural resource issues in accordance with the [WSDOT Tribal Consultation Policy](#) and [Centennial Accord Plan](#). The team should also be communicating with watershed groups, including Watershed Planning Act ("2514") groups and Salmon Recovery Act ("2496") Lead Entities. This is especially important when a watershed characterization approach is considered. If affected tribes or local jurisdictions are unable to attend IPT meetings, WSDOT will coordinate with them and report back to the IPT.

To avoid overwhelming and alienating the representatives of the other governments, a single WSDOT member of the IPT should be designated as their contact. All initial contacts should go through this person, including data and document requests and meeting requests. The contact will develop working relationships with specific individuals in each agency, streamlining communications. This will also avoid duplicate requests for identical or similar materials or services.

A manual providing additional guidance on collaborative local agency and WSDOT project planning processes can be viewed at: [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/biz/csd/BPBC\\_Final/building\\_projects.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/biz/csd/BPBC_Final/building_projects.pdf)

## **7.06 Mitigation Opportunity Outreach**

In order to ensure that the provisions of [RCW 47.06C.040](#) (8)(c) are realized, the IPT should develop an outreach strategy with any entities having knowledge of (or ability to help implement) potential mitigation opportunities, including the Department of Natural Resources, Watershed Planning Act (or equivalent) groups, Salmon Recovery Act Lead Entities, and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups, in order to identify and quantify a broad range of potential mitigation sites in the project area. The IPT

may then use their prioritized lists of potential sites, or assess other sites, to determine if they are appropriate as potential mitigation for the project. Other tools, including Wetland Mitigation Banks, WSDOT Watershed Characterizations, SSHIAP products, TMDL Studies, or other watershed assessment products, may also be used to identify alternative mitigation options that might effectively compensate impacts of transportation projects and be better for transportation and environmental resources than on-site mitigation options.

- 8.01 Tracking the Use of Agency Resources
- 8.02 Performance Measures
- 8.03 Process of Providing Feedback for Revising Guidance

## **8.01 Tracking the Use of Agency Resources**

In order to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the IPT process, especially in terms of whether it achieves the desired outcomes, or goals, of the IPT and demonstrates accountability, it will be necessary for each IPT to:

1. Track the use of agency resources;
2. Determine whether this use of resources is meeting agreed upon project performance measures based on the goals; and
3. Then let agency management and the public know whether those performance measures are being met so any necessary adjustments to the IPT process and guidance can be identified and made.

Therefore, as the first step in this process, it is essential that each IPT track the use of all agency resources, including staff time and money. Although this was not done for the Hood Canal Bridge Project, an IDT questionnaire was used on two occasions, which gave participants an opportunity to rate and evaluate agency involvement, process, and outcomes, and an IDT Questionnaire Report was prepared to summarize the results (*See appendices 4 and 17*). In addition, a number of tools have potential for tracking (and even anticipating) the use of agency resources, but more still needs to be done.

For instance, *Appendix 18*, a Draft Project Data Collection Template, has been developed to track performance, including key decision dates, time savings or delays, environmental outcomes, cost savings, etc., and WSDOT has developed a Project Delivery Information System (PDIS) that can be used to track the use of WSDOT resources, including staff time and project dollars. (*See [Project Delivery Information System](#)*) However, other participating agencies also need to develop tools for tracking their use of agency resources. (This may be necessary if agencies invoice WSDOT on a project-by-project basis.) Another tool that WSDOT has developed and is using is Cost Risk Assessment (CRA), which allows the agency to estimate the timeframe and cost range within which a project can be delivered based on a number of assumptions regarding a “base” (optimal) situation, and various risks (or opportunities) for time or cost increases (or reductions). Also, the co-located Multi-Agency Permit Team (MAP Team) is evaluating resource tracking options to aid in their evaluation.

## **8.02 Performance Measures**

As stated in [Section 1.03](#), there are many potential advantages to using an IPT, and each IPT is expected to define various goals for their project. Each IPT should also adopt some performance measures for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the IPT process, as applied to their project, in meeting its goals (unless other performance measures applicable to multiple projects are adopted). An IPT should adopt its performance measures as soon after defining its goals as possible, and then apply the performance measures after project permitting and again after project delivery (or perhaps even quarterly), to determine whether the process has resulted in a use of agency resources that meets the adopted performance measures. At a minimum, such performance measures should determine whether the process was efficient and effective in delivering a project on time and within budget in an

environmentally responsible manner, by avoiding or minimizing potential time delays, project costs, and environmental impacts, and recording the reasons if any goals are not met.

For example, an IPT might conclude, based on a Cost Risk Assessment (CRA), that some reasonable performance measures for their project would be to deliver the project within a shorter timeframe and/or within a lower cost range than probability might otherwise suggest simply because those risks and/or opportunities and their probability of occurrence were identified early and can be avoided or capitalized upon. Similarly, it should also be possible for an IPT to identify the likely and possible environmental impacts (and/or opportunities for environmental improvement) that could occur as a result of a given project under the IPT process, and identify some performance measures that would minimize the likelihood of those environmental impacts occurring.

Although project-specific performance measures have not yet been developed for any project, WSDOT has devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to developing and examining various performance measurement tools and options, some in cooperation with other agencies. In September of 2002, WSDOT produced a draft white paper entitled “Proposed Transportation Permit Streamlining Performance Measures”, where various performance measures addressing the goals of TPEAC were proposed, and WSDOT subsequently worked with various resource agencies in an effort to refine those proposed performance measures. WSDOT has also developed a number of tools for tracking and reporting progress on projects, including regional monthly progress reports, project websites, an ESA Consultation Tracking Sheet, and the “beige pages” of WSDOT’s [“Gray Notebook”](#) entitled “Measures, Markers, and Mileposts”, a quarterly accountability report to the Washington Transportation Commission on transportation programs and department management. In addition, the Multi-Agency Permit Team (MAP Team) has also developed a draft paper on performance measures.

### **8.03 Process of Providing Feedback for Revising Guidance**

Once the information on a project’s use of agency resources is collected and compiled for comparison with any performance measures adopted for the project, the results of this comparison should be conveyed to agency management and the public so they know whether the project’s goals and performance measures are being met. WSDOT’s environmental managers can then determine, based on the results from multiple projects, whether any changes need to be made to the IPT process/guidance.

Participants in the process should also be surveyed after each IPT concludes its work, so their experience and impressions of the process, and any suggestions for improvement, can be recorded and considered for incorporation in this IPT Guidance. “Best practices” and revised tools can be referenced in, or attached to the IPT Guidance. As the IPT Guidance is used and improved over time, it may evolve from an internal working document into adopted agency guidance that can be referenced in the [WSDOT Environmental Procedures Manual](#).

The IPT Guidance will be electronically housed on a WSDOT internal server and maintained by the WSDOT Headquarters Environmental Services Office.